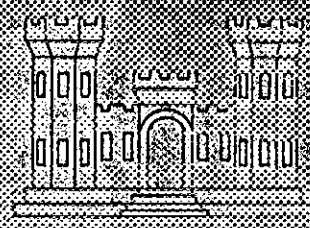


Unclassified per instruction of OCH letter  
14 Jan 1946

**CONFIDENTIAL**

PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION  
(REVIEW OF REPORTS)  
OF  
BOSTON HARBOR, MASS.  
(PLEASURE BAY)  
MASSACHUSETTS



AUTHORITY—THIS REPORT IS  
SUBMITTED IN COMPLIANCE  
WITH RESOLUTION ADOPTED  
AUG. 26, 1941, BY THE COMMITTEE  
ON RIVERS AND HARBORS OF  
THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTA-  
TIVES, UNITED STATES.

U. S. ENGINEER OFFICE  
BOSTON, MASS.  
JANUARY 31, 1942

COPY NO. 16

1300/12 Boston

PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION (REVIEW OF REPORTS)  
OF BOSTON HARBOR (PLEASURE BAY), MASS.

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Syllabus

The District Engineer is of the opinion that the improvement desired at Boston Harbor (Pleasure Bay), Massachusetts, is entirely local in character and, therefore, would not warrant the expenditure of federal funds for its accomplishment. A survey of the locality is not recommended.

War Department  
United States Engineer Office  
Boston, Massachusetts  
January 31, 1942

Subject: Preliminary examination (review of reports) of Boston Harbor  
(Pleasure Bay), Massachusetts

To: The Chief of Engineers, U. S. Army, through the Division Engineer,  
North Atlantic Division

1. Authority.- This report is submitted in compliance with the following resolution, adopted August 26, 1941, by the Committee on Rivers and Harbors of the House of Representatives, United States:

RESOLVED BY THE COMMITTEE ON RIVERS AND HARBORS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, UNITED STATES, That the Board of Engineers for Rivers and Harbors created under section 3 of the River and Harbor Act, approved June 13, 1902, be, and is hereby, requested to review the reports on Boston Harbor, Massachusetts, submitted in House Document Numbered 244, Seventy-second Congress, first session, with a view to determining if the existing project should be modified to provide a channel from the forty-foot channel to the old ferry slip on the Pleasure Bay side of Fort Independence.

2. Reports under review.- The reports contained in House Document No. 244, 72d Congress, 1st session, are on preliminary examination and survey of Boston Harbor, authorized by the River and Harbor Act approved July 3, 1930. In his report dated February 6, 1932, the Chief of Engineers recommended deepening the main ship channel from President Roads to Commonwealth Pier No. 1 to 40 feet for a width of 600 feet, widening at the bend, and dredging to a depth of 40 feet at mean low water an anchorage area on the north side of President Roads, at a total estimated cost of \$4,800,000,

with \$30,000 annually for maintenance, subject to certain provisions of local cooperation. The action of Congress was favorable.

3. In accordance with the directive quoted in paragraph 2 above and the stated desires of local interests, the present report deals only with that portion of Boston Harbor known as Pleasure Bay.

4. Description.- Pleasure Bay is a small indentation in the south shore of Boston Harbor adjacent to South Boston. It has an area of about 150 acres which is partially exposed to storms from the east, but is well protected for the most part against winds from other directions. Pleasure Bay is easy of access from the main ship channel of Boston Harbor. The approach channel has a minimum depth of 11 feet and a minimum width of 300 feet between the 12-foot contours. Depths in the bay range up to 28 feet in an area of approximately 45 acres within the 12-foot contour.

5. No bridge crosses Pleasure Bay, nor are there any terminal or transfer facilities located along its shores. Traffic consists entirely of pleasure boating during the recreational season. There is no commerce on this section of Boston Harbor. No federal project for Pleasure Bay has ever been recommended, nor have any prior reports been made on this waterway. The improvement under consideration would involve no questions of water power, flood control, or other special subjects not discussed in this report.

6. The mean and spring ranges of tide in Pleasure Bay are 9.5 and 11.0 feet, respectively. The locality is shown on U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey Charts Nos. 246, 248 and 1207, and on the map accompanying this report.

7. Tributary area.- The area immediately tributary to Pleasure Bay is South Boston, a densely populated section of Boston lying to the east of Fort Point Channel and fronting on the harbor and a portion of the main ship channel. Located in this area are the U. S. Navy Dry Dock No. 3, which is capable of handling the largest vessel afloat; the U. S. Army Base pier, the largest pier in Boston Harbor; and a number of diversified industries which contribute to the general commerce of the port. The north and west shores

of the bay have been partially developed by the City of Boston for park purposes, and on the east shore is the U. S. Military Reservation of Fort Independence. The locality is served by the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad, although there is no direct rail connection to any point on Pleasure Bay.

8. Other improvements.- Pleasure Bay was dredged to its present dimensions by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in 1919 and 1920, for the purpose of obtaining material to complete the reclamation of about 50 acres of flats between the bay and the Reserved Channel. The cost of this work to the state could not be obtained.

9. Improvement desired.- The resolution authorizing this report was introduced by Congressman John W. McCormack, 12th Massachusetts District, in the interest of the Massachusetts Nautical School, Department of Education, Commonwealth of Massachusetts. In a statement to this office from the school commissioners, under date of October 16, 1941, it was said that the necessity for the desired improvement was not definitely determined, and that the object of requesting a survey and study of the proposed project was to obtain data to determine the approximate cost and practicability of using Fort Independence as a permanent base for the school and for comparison with other sites under consideration.

10. The improvement desired is to dredge, if necessary, the existing channel from the main ship channel in Boston Harbor to Pleasure Bay to a depth of 24 feet and width of 100 feet at mean high water, to a pier or bulkhead at the location of the existing ferry slip on the west side of Castle Island (which is no longer in a usable condition, due to deterioration extending over a long period of years); a turning basin 1,000 feet in diameter and 24 feet deep at mean high water adjacent to the pier or bulkhead; and a slip about 475 feet long, 24 feet deep at mean low water, and 100 feet wide to provide a berth for a vessel which may be allocated to the Nautical School for training purposes.

11. Discussion and conclusions.- The improvement of Pleasure Bay desired by the commissioners of the Massachusetts Nautical School is designed

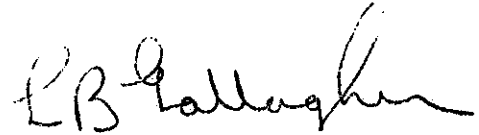
for a training ship having dimensions of 427 feet in length, 57 feet in beam, and draft of 20 feet. Due to the present war emergency, however, it is doubtful if such a ship, or even a smaller one, could be obtained for some time after the war is over. Doubt has been expressed also as to whether or not the Commonwealth of Massachusetts or the Maritime Commission would finance or assist in financing the project. The present ship used by the school is about 65 years old and is owned by the Maritime Commission. It has been used by the school for practically 33 years. Until recently this vessel was stationed at the Boston Navy Yard, but because of the need of space for war purposes it was removed to North End Park, on the Boston waterfront, which it uses without rental charges by the city.

12. Under authority of the Joint Resolution of Congress, approved May 1, 1890, the Secretary of War, on March 15, 1907, granted to the City of Boston permission to assume control over the Military Reservation of Fort Independence, Castle Island, for park purposes. In view of the existing emergency, it will be necessary for the government to make use of the premises, which will require discontinuance of the city's use for the duration of the war, and possibly longer. Recommendation to this effect was made by this office January 5, 1942, which was concurred in by the Division Engineer, although no final action has been taken in the matter up to the present time. The use of Castle Island by the military authorities, therefore, precludes any possible use of it by the Massachusetts Nautical School for an indefinite period, and possibly not at all.

13. While it is the policy of the War Department to cooperate with local interests in matters pertaining to harbor improvements, the federal government normally provides only those improvements which benefit general navigation. It is obvious that the work desired in Pleasure Bay would serve only the needs of the Massachusetts Nautical School. Furthermore, the construction of berthing facilities and the dredging of approach channels thereto are items of improvement that are not ordinarily undertaken by the Department as part of the federal program for improvement of rivers and harbors. Terminal facilities in general, as well as berthing facilities, are usually

provided and maintained either by state, municipal, or private interests, the federal government being concerned primarily with the provision of the principal channels, anchorages, and like improvements. It is considered, therefore, that in view of the purely local character of the desired improvement, the expenditure of federal funds for its accomplishment is unwarranted.

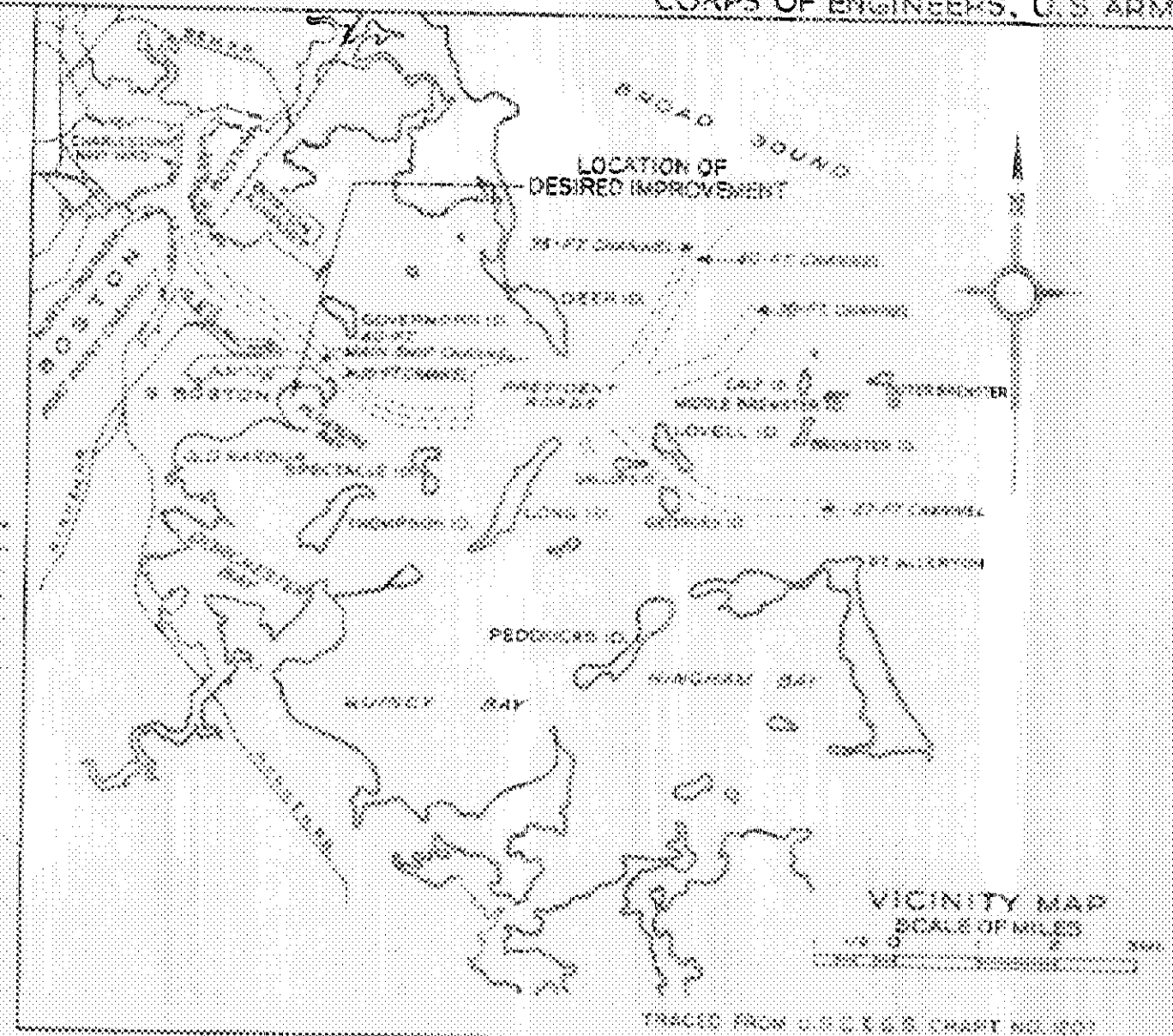
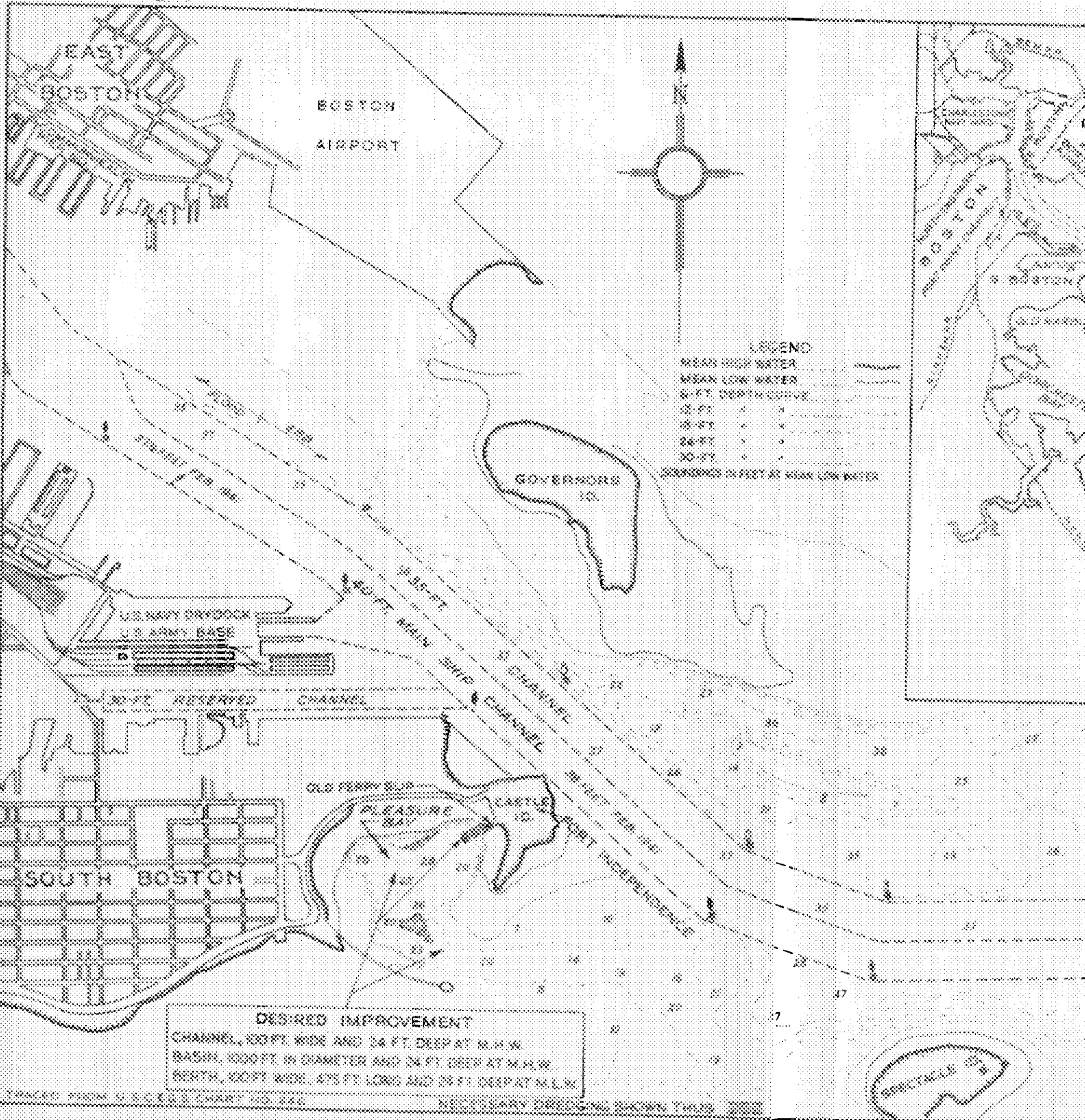
14. Recommendation.- In view of the foregoing, a survey of Boston Harbor (Pleasure Bay), Massachusetts, is not recommended.



L. B. Gallagher  
Lieut. Col., Corps of Engineers  
District Engineer

Inclosure:  
Map





80-FT. ANCHORAGE

# BOSTON HARBOR (PLEASURE BAY) MASSACHUSETTS

IN 1 SHEET SCALE 1:20000

U.S. ENGINEER OFFICE, BOSTON, MASS. JANUARY 31, 1942

SUBMITTED: *Edward J. Wherry* Chief, Civil Works Division  
*E. B. Gallagher* Lt. Col., Corps of Engineers

TO ACCOMPANY PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION REPORT  
 DATED JANUARY 31, 1942.

DR. BY  
 TR. BY E.S.S. CO.  
 CR. BY E.S.S.

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